No. 77

The REDEMPTION of Marie Gordon

THE TRAGIC STORY OF WRONGED WOMANHOOD

Price 10¢

Alice capped the climax when she tricked Betty, her sister, into going to the home of a libertine like Fredericks.

R. of M. G., No. 77.

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Cincinnati, Ohio.

PHILIP GORDON'S thoughts were traveling in the right channel, concerning the woman who had left the log cabin. "Unless I am much mistaken, she knows more about that man Fredericks than she is willing to admit," he mused.

How long he sat there alone, he could not remember afterward. He fell into a doze and the cigar, half burned, dropped from his fingers. His breath came deeply and at regular intervals.

Suddenly something startled him into semi-wakefulness. He heard the sound of footsteps.

His first thought was that the woman had forgotten something and was returning to get it. Gordon sat up hastily.

Then the door which led to the room in which the dead man lay, swung open creakily.

With a bound Gordon was on his feet. The cold perspiration stood out in big drops on his forehead.

In the doorway, looking directly at him stood—the dead man!

Phil's tall figure swayed for a moment. He recovered himself the moment his eyes rested on the dangerous-looking revolver with which the trapper held him covered.

"Well, I'll be danged!" The words were spoken gently and were followed by a bitter laugh. "Another man in my house!"

The voice had a queer, toneless quality, and the pale blue eyes that rested on Gordon's had the vacant look peculiar to the eyes of those who live too much in solitude.

Very slowly and very deliberately he advanced, a grin overspreading his bearded features.

"I—I am sorry I intruded," Gordon began. "I did not know that you—that she——"

"That's alright, my friend," the trapper spoke wearily. "I know all about it. I heard you when you came in. And I have been lying in that room yonder waiting until she got out of earshot before I showed myself."

"But—but," said the other, feeling very uncomfortable with the gun pointed at his head. "I was under the impression that you had died. At least the — the woman——"

"Yes, I heard what she told you," the big man interrupted in the same weary tone. "We won't waste any more time. Now I want you to do a little job for me. Here is a shovel. We'll go out and you get busy."

"But wait a minute, man," Gordon cried. "I want to explain."

"There is nothing to explain," came back quickly. "You came here to pay a visit to the hellhound I am going to kill. You are a friend of his, and that makes it all the worse for you."

"Why, I don't know who you are talking about," replied Gordon "It is true I came here to find Mr. Fredericks, the multi-millionaire Chicago and New York banker. I am sure he can not be the man you have in mind. I assure you I had no intention of intruding here.

"I stopped merely to ask for direction, and when I found the lady weping I——"

"You should have gone on, but you didn't," the trapper broke in with an unpleasant laugh. "Now it won't do any good to offer any more explanations. The fact alone that you are a friend of a man like Fredericks, is enough for me. Get the shovel and come with me."

With the black muzzle of the big revolver following his every movement, Gordon decided that for the present at least it was best to humor the man.

So while he picked up the shovel which stood a-

gainst the wall, he found himself constantly covered with the gun.

"Outside now, commanded the trapper. "You go first, and no foolishness now. If you make an attempt to get away, I'll fill you full of lead. Steady now. That's it."

As the two men stood in front of the cabin, Gordon found enough courage to ask:

"What do you want me to do with this shovel?"

"You are going to dig three graves," was the low spoken answer.

"Three graves?" the other gasped. "For whom?"

The big man laughed noisily.

"You'll find out bye and bye," he declared, then added with a note of satisfaction in his voice: "I know one man with millions who will never again tackle a woman that does not belong to him. He is going to lie in the first grave you'll dig."

"That would be murder and I won't see you deliberately kill a man even though he is no friend of mine." Gordon threw down the shovel and walked toward the trapper. "Listen," he cried, "I have an idea just why you——"

"Your ideas are all wrong, my friend," came the quick interruption. "Now you better begin to dig over there," pointing to a spot beside the log cabin. You'll dig three of them, all in a row. Begin now. They must be the same dimensions, two by six."

There was nothing else for Gordon to do but obey. He sank the shovel into the soft sand, feeling that he was acting in a horrid dream.

As he worked, however, the sense of unreality left him and his mind began to wrestle with the problem of securing the revolver from the trapper, who, he was now convinced, must be mentally unbalanced.

Yes, he felt sure this big burly giant of a man had been bereft of his senses. His look, his every word and his actions proclaimed it.

Gordon kept on digging and began to wait for a favorable opportunity. It seemed, however, that it would not come.

Chapter 254

A DREADFUL TALE

OUT OF the corner of his eyes Gordon could see the man sitting on the edge of the porch floor —a huge figure. In spite of his beard and his bigness, there was something pathetic, something almost child-like about this fellow. The mild eyes followed Gordon's every movements for some time, then the low, mirthless laugh came again over his lips.

"Did you ever see a wolf die after eating arsenic, pardner?" he quired with dreadful gentleness. "Well, I have. Oh, I fooled that wife of mine good. That is the way I died right in front of her eyes, and you played into my hands by coming along just when you did. It gave me a chance to die without her watching me too close.

"The sound of your coming attracted her and she turned around to look out of the window. By the time you knocked on the door she gave me a swift glance as if to make sure that I was dead. She surely thought I was.

"I heard her as she opened the door and asked you what you wanted. I heard her cry and sob. But that stuff was all a sham. Way down in her heart she was glad because I kicked off.

"But don't stop digging, pardner," he cried as Gordon rested for a moment on his shovel. "You will have to keep right on so those holes are finished by the time she returns with her lover.

"And while you dig I'll tell you a few things. I'll tell you a story the like of which you don't often hear." He paused long enough to shift the revolver from one hand to the other, then continued:

"I was born and raised in these mountains. My father was a trapper and I followed in his footsteps. I learned to love these endless forests and the lakes.

"There was always plenty of game to be had. A man with a steady aim could kill a dozen wolves a day for their hides.

"Then there are many other species of animals with hides that were valuable. The lakes were filled with all kinds of fish. I made a good living and managed to save quite a bit of money besides.

"But as the years passed and I grew into manhood, I grew lonesome. I never knew much about these women except my mother. She was the most saintly creature God ever let live.

"I remember how happy she and my father were together. There was never a harsh word or even a mild quarrel.

"I used to think how happy I would be if I could get a woman like my mother for a wife. As a rule, though, the women in the village and towns did not want to live in a forest cabin. Not enough amusement here to suit them.

"One day I made a trip to Windsor and sold a big lot of skins. I got such a good price for them that I decided to celebrate a bit. I went to several places where there was music and finally ended up in a cabaret.

"Among the performers was a young girl whose appearance betrayed an advanced stage of some bad disease.

"She was as thin as a rail and she had occasional coughing spells. Once I saw her hold a handkerchief to her mouth. When she withdrew it, I saw that it was red with blood.

"At the table next to mine I heard a woman say:

" 'Poor Flora. I don't think she'll last another

month. Someone ought to take her into the mountains and give her a chance.'

"The longer I watched the girl, the more I became interested in her. She was unusually pretty in spite of her frailness. I waited until her turn was over, then asked the proprietor of the cabaret to introduce me to her.

"It was customary for performers to sit at tables with patrons, and Flora did not hesitate to sit with me.

" 'This is no place for you,' I told her.

"She laughed in a way hat made me shiver.

" 'It is as good as any other in this town,' she replied. 'There is no use of me making a change now. The doctor tells me I have about three more months to live.'

"For over an hour I talked to her like a father. She listened with those big eyes of hers eating every word. I felt myself growing hot and cold by turns. I was falling in love with the girl without being aware of it. When I suggested that she go to the mountains with me, she laughed again.

" 'I'd go in a minute,' she said. 'But I won't live long enough to pay you for your trouble, my friend.'

"She evidently took it for granted that I expected her to pay me with the same coin that is usually exacted from women of her kind. It made me angry to think that she took me to be that sort of a man.

"I let her know it at once. I shall never forget how she stared at me when I proposed marriage to her.

" 'Quit your kidding,' she cried as another coughing spell shook her. 'You don't want a corpse for a wife.'

"I told her that she would not be a corpse if she came with me to live in the pure mountain air. I pleaded for a long time, and finally she consented. The following day we were married.

"I shall never forget how she clapped her thin hands with delight as we traveled back to the cabin that was to be her future home.

"She was a nature lover. Every moment she detected something new to marvel at. For the next four months I nursed her like a baby.

"By degrees she began to recover. I saw to it that she had plenty of raw eggs and milk as well as other nourishing food. I had an old Indian squaw stay with her while I went to the village to make the necessary purchases.

"She was grateful. Oh, yes, she was that, but I don't think she ever really loved me. Yes, I am damned sure now that she never loved me.

"When the spring of the year came, she stepped for the first time from her sick-bed to look into the mirror. I knew that she was beautiful, but I had no idea of her tremendous vanity.

"'Why, I can hardly recognize myself,' she cried happily.

"That did not surprise me. Within six months Flora had grown from a frail sickly girl into a healthy, lovely woman. I loved her madly, and when she hinted that she would like to go back on the stage, I nearly had a fit.

"I pleaded with her to forget it. She did for a while, and I was beginning to believe that she really loved me. Ah, those were happy days when she came to me of her own free will and put her arms about my neck.

"But there was something that worried me a great deal. I longed to have a child of our own. Flora would not hear of it.

"The difference of opinion with regard to this delicate matter brought on the first quarrel. Then she told me straight to my face that she would not bear a

child for the best man alive.

"My suspicion was aroused when one day I caught her asking one of my friends who lived on the other side of the lake, and who had come to see me on some business, how to get back to Windsor. She was secretly planning to run away from me.

"After we were alone I took her to task about this. She laughed in my face as she cried:

" 'You don't think for a minute that I intend to spend the rest of my life in this God-forsaken hole. I am going back to the city alone if you won't come with me.'

"I always hated city life and city people with their ugly deceits and shams and rotteness. The very thought of losing my wife drove me wild.

"I was ready to kill her rather than see her go back to the place where I found her. For a time she seemed to have abandoned the idea of leaving.

"Then one day a party of American tourists passed through here. The leader of the party was a man by the name of Fredericks.

"He had just purchased a fine cottage on the other side of the lake. The people with him, most of whom were women, had come to spend the summer there.

"I can still see how Fredericks opened his eyes when he saw my wife. She was far more beautiful than any of those painted dolls he had with him.

"He was very nice to me and said that we ought to become friends since we were the closest neighbor. Instinctively I mistrusted the man. The way he stared at Flora made me want to kill him.

"My work as a trapper forced me to be away from home a good deal. I might have known that Fredericks would visit Flora during my absence.

"But I remained blind to what was taking place because my wife had a neat way of pulling the wool over

my eyes.

"She pretended to love me in order to keep me from suspecting the truth. One late afternoon as I returned home, I saw Fredericks sitting on the porch with my wife.

"They had not seen me. I quickly changed my course and approached the cabin from the rear. Mad with jealousy I determined to overhear their conversation.

"And what I heard nearly maddened me. Fredericks had become Flora's lover and he had promised to take her to New York with him as soon as she got rid of me.

" 'But how are you going to get rid of your husband?' I heard him ask.

" 'Leave that to me,' my wife answered with a low laugh. 'You can depend on it that he won't stand in our way after the next twenty-four hours are over. You have made me love you, and I'll do anything in the world for you.'

"I should have rushed out from my hiding place and killed them both, but curiostiy seemed to hold me in check.

"I was anxious to find out how my wife meant to put me out of the way. She and Fredericks talked for a little while longer, then he rose to go.

"Most of the conversation was carried on in whispers, and I could not hear what was being said. However, his parting words were plainly audible.

" 'As soon as it is all over,' he said, 'row across the lake and give me the signal. I'll come over here and we'll bury him and take the next train for New York. And once there, I'll make you the happiest woman that ever lived.'

" 'You have made me very happy already,' she told

him.

"After Fredericks had gone, I ran back into the forest and thirty minutes later entered the cabin as if nothing had happened. My wife was unusually loving to me.

"Although I felt like strangling her, I managed to keep myself under control But I determined to keep a close watch upon her.

"The next ady I told her that I was making a trip into the mountains in search of lynx. She remained silent as I said this, but I noticed how her lips curled into a peculiar smile.

"When the following morning came I left, but remained in hiding a short distance from the cabin. I saw Flora leave for the village about thirty minutes later.

"Very carefully I went after her, always keeping out of sight. I saw her enter the drugstore and come out a moment later.

"The owner of that drugstore was an old friend of mine. He seemed surprised when I came in. Without asking he told me that my wife had bought a small quantity of arsenic, saying that she wanted to poison a few of the wolves that prowled around the cabin.

"Now I realized what was in store for me. Flora meant to kill me with that poison. I could not bring myself to believe that she could be capable of deliberately murdering me.

"As I came home that night I began to watch her every move. I saw every dish she cooked. I was quite sure that no arsenic had been put in any of the food.

"A few days passed without anything happening. This morning she complained of a headache and she asked me to stay home with her.

"By eleven o'clock she seemed better and she suggested that we have our noon lunch. I went into the ad-

joining room and watched through a crack in the door. As Flora poured out the coffee I saw her put the arsenic in my cup.

"It was easy for me to hoodwink her. As we sat at the table she watched me anxiously.

"By the time I was ready to drink my coffee she rose suddenly and went out on the porch. I knew why she did that. She did not have the nerve to watch me drink the poison that was to kill me.

"With a quick move I dumped the coffee out of the window close to my elbow. When she came in I was holding the cup to my lips, thus making her believe that I drank every drop of it.

"My mind had already been made up what to do. And it was far more easy than I expected. I feigned illness and went through all the agonies of a dying man.

"I did this because I knew what would happen. She had agreed to go for Fredericks, and that is just what she did.

"I want to confront them. I want to tell them both what fools they were to think that they could shove me aside. And then I am going to kill them both. Their graves will be waiting for them when they come.

"As the trapper paused he shaded his eyes with one hand and grinned diabolically. "Well," he ended calmly, "they are coming now."

Chapter 255

FACING DEATH.

N THE gloomy distance Gordon could make out a tiny dark speck on the surface of the lake. During the trapper's long recital he had been constantly on the alert to take quick advantage of any lapse of vigilance on the part of his captor. But there had been no lapse.

Despite his anxiety, which increased every moment, Gordon had come to feel in the man a sense of wilderness justice.

If possible he wanted to prevent this double murder. He tried to concentrate on some plan whereby he might escape and warn Fredericks and the woman. But the next moment he decided that neither of them deserved warning.

Fredericks least of all. He was a man of very low morals—a man every self-respecting woman shunned as a snake.

He was perhaps the worst libertine in either Chicago or New York. From one city he traveled to the other, always searching for new diversions with young women as the victims.

Nor was the trapper's wife deserving of leniency. She had deliberately tried to murder the man who saved her from certain death—the man who had given her his name.

"Well, pardner," the trapper spoke again, as Gordon finished the task, "we'll spread a tarpaulin over these graves so that Fredericks and my wife won't notice them when they come.

"When they get here I'll be laying in there where she left me. And I'll have to put you where you can't be heard."

He turned halfway around to reach for a rope which lay on the porch floor. It was the chance for which Gordon had been waiting.

Quick as a cat he leaped upon the man. But his efforts to get possession of the revolver brought a contemptous laugh from the big trapper.

With incredible swiftness one of the man's long arms shot out, and Gordon felt both of his pinned to his side.

Slowly the great muscles tightened about him until he felt his bones were breaking. With all his might he struggled to free himself.

"It's no use, pardner," said the trapper. "I have stood off half a dozen wolves at a time by grabbing their lower jaws as they came at me, and cracking their necks. I am the strongest man in Canada.

"You might as well give up. Too bad that you had to get mixed up in this, for I like your appearance. But I have to protect myself, for dead men tell no tales."

"What—what do you mean?" grasped Gordon.

"I mean that the third grave will be occupied by you," the other retorted quietly. "You belong to the wrong set when you call a man like Fredericks your friend, and you can't be much better than he."

"But Fredericks is no friend of mine," Phil protested. "He is all you called him and worse. I came here to find a certain woman——"

"No excuses," the trapper interrupted. "I don't believe any man or woman now. I have lost faith in everything human I would not believe God Almighty Himself."

While his captor was speaking, Gordon,

struggling but helpless in the vise-like grip, felt himself bound hand and foot.

He was shouldered as if he had been a sack of furs and carried swiftly back of the cabin. Like a sack of furs he was again put down on the ground, while the trapper lifted a flat stone partly concealed by the heavy underbrush.

Then he was lowered in the hole below. In the dim light he made out that his prison was a rock-walled cave —or was it his grave? There was a trickle of water somewhere.

"Not a bad place for storing valuable things," the trapper said, indicating some crude shelves where queer shaped bundles were stored. "There they are — my beauties, my silver sea otter skins. I'll put a few of them on the floor for you to lay on. Those stones are pretty hard."

Suiting his action to his words, the man spread the packages on the rocks and settled his prisoner upon them.

The dim light was suddenly swallowed up in darkness as the flat stone fell overhead. Gordon was alone in the vault-like chamber. It was the most horrible place imaginable.

In the blackness the smell of cold damp stones became keener. The silence, broken only by the trickling of water, was death-like.

He raised his head and strained in vain to hear other sounds. He remembered, and cursed himself for remembering, how men alone in the Canadian forests had been driven mad by the sound of water.

As the time passed the trickling and gurgling became whisperings. The whispering became maddening.

He bean to work at his bonds. In a frenzy he struggled to get his teeth into the ropes that bound his

feet. He was aware that the contents of his pockets were strewn on the floor.

In the hope that the woman or Fredericks might hear him, he uttered shout after shout. His words seemed to rebound in the small space and smite his ear drums.

When he ceased only the tomb-like silence, with its intermittent mocking seep of water, answered him again.

Gordon had no idea of the passage of time. After what might have been minutes, or hours, he fancied he heard a muffled report.

Was it the sound of a gun? Had there been similar reports that had been lost to him in the noise of his own shouting?

In order that he might hear better he rolled over in the darkness, and forgetful of the jagged rocks near him raised his head quickly to listen.

This time he heard one shot distinctly. It was followed by the scream of a woman. It was a frightful, piercing scream. Another shot came almost immediately afterward, and then dreadful silence.

Phil's heart turned sick within him. The trapper had murdered his wife and her lover. There was not the least doubt about that in his mind. And now his turn would come.

"Dead men tell no tales," the big trapper had told him.

What this meant he knew only too well. He was to pay with his life for having stumbled upon this domestic triangle. In order to keep him from informing the authorities, the trapper had determined to lay him in the third grave.

Again Gordon struggled with every ounce of his strength to free himself. The thought of dying now was

maddening.

He thouht of his two children and he thought of Marie Desmond, the woman he loved. What a fool he had been to come into these mountains to find a trace of Alice.

As he tossed about wildly his head came in sharp contact with one of the rocks. The next instant his senses fled.

When he regained consciousness, the big trapper was kneeling beside him, playing an electric flashlight on his face. The man was busy gathering the articles lying on the ground and putting them in his inside coat pocket.

Phil could feel every touch. They were gentle enough.

Among the things which were returned to his pocket, Phil treasured the small photo of his two children most. He stifled a sob as he again thought of them.

"You came near killing yourself, pardner," the trapper was saying. "You surely cut a deep hole in your head on that rock."

Gordon's head throbbed with an intensity that sickened him. He was hardly aware that the man had turned him over and was untying the knots that bound him.

He hardly knew how he climbed out of that hole into the welcome fresh air.

"I see there are still some of the things which dropped out of your pocket lying down there," remarked the trapper casually. "I'll get them for you."

Phil's first impulse was to run while the trapper was in the cave. He took a few hasty, swinging steps,

then stopped with a groan and pressed both hands to his aching head. The world wheeled drunkenly about him.

Hazily he saw the great stone which served as a door to the hole he had just left.

With a dazed idea of imprisoning the trapper, instead of running away from him, he stopped to lift it. Even as he grasped the stone, the man's head appeared above the ground.

"No use trying that, old man," he laughed. "You haven't the strength."

With an inward curse Gordon turned away. It was only too true. He was so weak that he could hardly stand on his feet.

The trapper had raised himself above the ground and replaced the flat stone easily. Gordon's head was swimming from the effort and he did not move.

Then the man placed a hand under his arm and steadied him as they walked together to the front of the cabin.

Down at the front of the lake was a canoe which had been drawn in on the sand. A Winchester rifle stood against the porch steps.

Gordon's eyes rested on these things for a moment, then swerved over to the spot where he had been compelled to dig three graves.

Two of them had been filled recently. He gasped with horror.

The third grave was to hold him!

"You—you killed them?" he heard himself saying to the trapper.

"I sure did," the trapper answered without the least emotion. "I had to. They were both murderers at

heart and had no right to live. And to make sure that the world will never know what happened here this day, I am compelled to——"

"My God, man!" Gordon cried, trembling in every limb "You don't mean to murder me in cold blood?"

"Why not?" came back. "Self preservation is the first law of nature. What kind of a damned fool do you think I am? Do you think that I want to be hung for shooting your friend Fredericks and my wife? Not much. My life is as dear to me as yours is to you."

With a low groan Gordon stared at the speaker as he finished.

"I am sorry I have to take this precautionary measure," the trapper spoke again. "If you have any word to send to your relatives, you can go into the cabin and write it now.

"You better obey me," he added as he fingered the trigger of his revolver. "I never miss my target."

It was then that to Phil came the horrible realization that the end of his earthly journey had come. It was hard for him to become reconciled to his fate.

And yet he was too proud to beg for his life. In the first place he saw the utter futility of it.

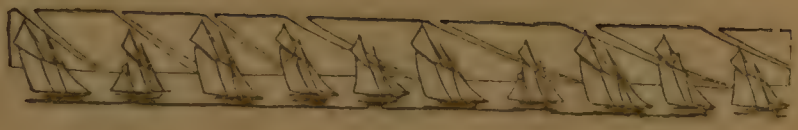
In the second place it would make him appear like a coward. And so, with a prayer on his lips, he entered the cabin. There was paper and a pen and ink lying on the table.

He sat down and rested his head on his hands for a moment. What was he to write? What could he say to those he loved?

"Merciful God, help me," he prayed. "Let me live for the sake of my children who need me."

But back of him stood grim death in the form of the trapper.

"Go on and write," the latter urged.



Chapter 256

A FAREWELL LETTER

GORDON took a hold of the pen, but it dropped from his hand. Unless a miracle happened, the end of half an hour would see him buried in that remaining grave outside the cabin. A sob got the better of his throat and broke from his lips.

"You better get a move on you," the trapper commanded. "I can't be waiting around here all day."

With a desperate move Phil reached into his pocket. The first thing his numb fingers touched was the photo of his two children. He brought it out and pressed his lips upon it.

He imagined he could hear Harry and Phyllis call:

"Daddy—daddy, when are you coming home?"

Before Gordon could make another move, the trapper's big hand reached over his shoulder and took the photo. For a long moment he stood there staring at it. The silence was intense.

"Harry and Phyllis." The trapper was reading the names which were written at the bottom of the picture. "Are these two kids yours?" he asked aloud.

"Yes," answered Phil, and began to write rapidly.

Perhaps no other living man ever was placed in a more frightful position. He was pouring out his very soul on that piece of white paper.

He wrote as follows:

"My dear babies:

"When this last message of mine reaches you, I shall have gone from this world forever. I can not ex-

plain why God saw fit to take me away from you now. But I am going.

"Always remember that your daddy loved you dearly. Don't allow anyone to tell you different. Miss Desmond will stay with you always.

"She will love you like a mother. I shall write to her on a separate sheet of paper what steps to take in order that she may not be removed from Oak Manor.

"And now that I have only a few more minutes to live, I will say goodby forever. Think kindly of me always, and my last breath will be a prayer for both of you. I love you."

Your Daddy."

Phil, having finished his last message to the children, shoved the paper aside and reached for another.

There were a good many things he wanted to say to the governess.

While he sat in silent thoughtfulness he noticed that the trapper was still holding the picture of his two children.

A great change seemed to have come over him. His next move was to reach for the letter his captive had written.

His eyes began to blur as he read. Several times he swallowed hard. At last he spoke.

"Pardner," he said. "Maybe I am a fool, but I'll take a chance on you for the sake of those two kids of yours Get your things together. I am going to let you go."

Gordon sprang to his feet.

"My God—do—do you mean it?" he gasped.

"You heard what I said," the other responded, tearing up the letter and returning the photo to Gordon.

"Oh—I don't know how to thank you," stammered Phil in his overwhelming gratitude. "You don't know

what this means to me. And now let me tell you why I came here.

"I suspected that that man Fredericks of having my wife with him at his cottage, and——"

"Don't tell me your story," interrupted the other. "We haven't time for it. That man Fredericks will never seduce another married woman nor a single one. He got what was coming to him."

"So he did," agreed Phil and waited.

"There is one thing you must promise me before I let you go," the trapper went on. I am asking you to keep this affair quiet forever. All I am asking you is that you say nothing about it until you reach the States. Is it a bargain?"

"It is," came back quickly. "And what is more, I'll promise never to speak of it after I get back to the States. Let Fredericks' relatives and friends find out for themselves how he lost his life."

After a pause the trapper asked:

"What is your wife's name?"

"Gordon—Alice Gordon," Phil replied.

"Then you came on a wild goose chase, my friend. No woman bearing such a name has been at Fredericks' cottage. The kind he brings out here are usually stage women from New York, and young ones at that."

Gordon nodded his head.

There was no longer any doubt in his mind but that the man was right. Alice was not the kind of a woman to tolerate others of her sex in a place like this.

Her jealous nature forbid it. There was but one thing to do now—return home as quickly as possible.

"Can—can I go now?" he asked almost timidly.

"Not until I have washed out your head and bandaged it," the other retorted.

Fifteen minutes later both men were standing in

the front of the cabin. Gordon was listening to the instructions the trapper was giving him.

"Follow the lake south until you come to a group of low foot hills. It marks the beginning of the trail that leads straight through the pass to the village. You can get a good horse there and that will take you to the nearest railroad town."

With an impulsive motion Phil Gordon extended his hand, which the other took with evident reluctance.

"I shall never forget this day," he said huskily. "But won't you tell me your name? You and I might meet again some day."

"No, we won't," the other replied gravely. "What my name is does not matter a great deal. The best thing you can do is to forget all about me and what happened.

"Remember your promise. Not a word to anyone until you have reached the States. If you double-cross me, I'll know it."

"I am not in the habit of doing such things, sir," declared Gordon with dignity. "Good-by, and once more, thank you."

"Good by and good luck," returned the other.

As Phil swung down toward the lake at an easy gate, he noticed that darkness was coming on.

He could well understand why the trapper was anxious to get rid of him. There would be a quick investigation as soon as it was learned that Fredericks was missing.

For a man of his wealth the entire Canadian mounted police would be summoned to search for him.

Gordon began to make every effort to increase his pace so as to get as far away from the scene of the double murder as quickly as possible.

It was nearly two hours before he reached the spot which would lead him away from the lake.

The ache in his head was getting worse at every step. In the gloom of the forest the dusk was deeper. His feet, unaccustomed to the treacherous Canadian passes, stumbled.

Repeatedly he missed his footing. He had not been gone half an hour from the lake when he fell very heavily over some obstruction in the path.

He hurt his leg and sat down to tie his handkerchief tightly about the joint. But a few steps convinced him that he could walk no further.

Cold determination urged him on. It would be suicide if he was caught by one of the Canadian Mounted and dragged back to the death cabin.

The pain in his knee and the agonizing throb of his head made the dim, dark forest reel above him. His slow progress rendered him helpless in case he should be attacked by a horde of hungry wolves.

Presently he heard a crackling in the underbrush to the right of the pass. A wolf, perhaps, or a bear. Phil was too miserable to feel fear.

A moment later the figure of a man emerged from the darkness. He wore the uniform of a forest ranger. He carried a rifle and around his ample hips was a well-filled cartridge belt.

"God, man, but I am glad to see you," cried Gordon, looking up into the smooth shaven face of the stranger. "How far am I from the nearest railroad town?"

"Twenty miles," the ranger replied, regarding the speaker with curious interest. "But what the devil are you doing in these parts?"

For a moment Phil was at a loss what to answer. He could not tell the truth. Necessity forced him to resort to a lie which he put over in the most convincing manner.

"I am a mining engineer from Windsor," he declared without batting an eye. "I came out here to look over some property for a concern in that city. Not being acquainted with this part of the country, I got lost.

"Now you can understand why I am so glad to see you. If you have the time, I would like to have you accompany me for several miles and show me the way."

The ranger shook his head.

"Sorry I can't help you out just now," he said. "There has been trouble back near the lake. A man by the name of Fredericks is missing and I am trying to find him. I am told that there was some shooting in the neighborhood of Grantham's cabin. Did you hear anything like shooting?"

"Nothing," the other responded.

"Did you see anyone?" was the next question.

"Nobody."

Gordon answered the last question with a groan, and placed both hands to his bandaged temples.

He hoped this ranger would not continue to torture him with any more questions. But he was not to get off so easy.

"Which way did you come?" the ranger demanded.

With an effort Phil remembered his promise to the trapper. He explained wearily that he had been lost since morning.

"And you heard no shooting?"

"I did not."

"Nor saw anyone?"

"No."

Then something unexpected happened. The ranger had suddenly changed his voice. When he spoke again it was that of the trapper.

"I see you kept your promise, pardner," he said.

holding out his hand. "And I am right glad you did. Had you forgotten your promise to me, I would have killed you on the spot."

It was one of the greatest surprises in Gordon's life when he recognized in the smooth shaven and rather handsome man his former captor.

"Why—why, it's you!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, it's me," the trapper laughed softly. "And I followed to put you to a test. It was easy for me to shave off my beard as soon as you were gone and beat you here by canoe down the lake.

"Well, since you have proven that you are white and can be trusted, I'll go with you as far as the nearest railroad town."

"But the police—the Canadian Mounted," Gordon began.

"They'll never recognize me without my beard," came back with a chuckle. "And besides, they won't know that Fredericks and my wife have been killed unless they find the bodies where they are buried—which is not at all likely."

Without saying another word, Gordon allowed the man to take his arm and together they walked until they came to a small clearing in the forest.

It was so dark now that it was almost impossible to proceed farther. The trapper lit a fire, then collected moss and weeds out of which he made a bed for Phil.

With the gentleness of a woman he washed out the latter's wound and bound it up with fresh linen.

"You are about played out, pardner," he said. "What you need is a good night's sleep, and I'll see that you get it."

"But aren't you going to lay down?" Gordon queried.

The trapper shook his head.

"One of us will have to stay on guard," he declared as he tapped his rifle significantly. "There is no telling what might happen. Wolves sometimes become troublesome, and there are other dangerous creatures —some of them human. I want to make sure that you get back safe to those kiddies of yours."

A wave of warm gratitude swept over Phil.

Although this man had committed a double murder, he had some fine qualities in him.

"It is surely nice of you, sir," he said. "And I want you to know that I am very grateful."

So while the big trapper kept the fire alive, Gordon dropped off to sleep. Twice he awoke during the night only to see his companion seated near the fire, staring into space.

At his right, leaning against a tree, was his rifle within easy reach. The strap which buttoned over the revolver in his holster, had been loosened for quick use in case of need.

With a slight shiver Phil went back to sleep. The next time he opened his eyes, the morning sun glared into them.

The odor of freshly cooked coffee and fried bacon struck his nostrils.

"Good morning," called the trapper cheerily. "How do you feel?"

"Much better," answered Gordon. "The pain in my head is almost entirely gone." He took a few steps then added: "My leg, too, is feeling better."

"Well, let's have something to eat now," the other suggested. "I brought some provisions with me in the canoe. You'll need a lot of strength to stand the journey from here to the next railroad town."

Gordon ate with much relish. He could not recall when he had eaten anything previous that tasted quite

as good as this fried bacon, dry bread and strong black coffee.

While they ate, the trapper talked almost incessantly. But not a single personal question did he ask.

Neither did he speak about his intention for the future.

He made it plain that his chief concern was to see Gordon safely on the train which would take him to Windsor, and from there across the border into the States.

Chapter 257

ALICE'S ESCAPE

THERE is not the least doubt but that a woman's love is deeper and more endurable than that of a man's. Almost every day one hears of tremendous sacrifices women are making for the men they love. They will suffer hardships, deprivations and even abject poverty because of the sublime emotion which is essentially a woman's nature.

Women have been known to lie, steal and commit crimes for the men they love.

All of this is true. But on the other hand, women can hate far more vindictively than men. In some cases a woman whose ire has been aroused, will go almost to any extreme to get even with the offender.

There is one emotion, however, which often makes veritable fiends of women. That emotion is jealousy. Listen to what Spenser, the poet says:

"There is no more cursed than they all,
That canker-worm, that monster jealousy,
Which eats the heart and feeds upon the gall,
Turning all love's delights to misery."

That is true indeed when we, for a moment, stop to analyze the case of Alice Gordon.

What a pity it is that this woman, whom nature had endowed so generously, should stoop to the crimes which must be charged against her.

Her cruel selfishness drove her to estrange her younger sister from a father who idolized her. But it was her fiendish jealousy which caused her to seek Betty's moral destruction.

Continued in next number

Tell Your Own Fortune!

M'lle LeNormand's
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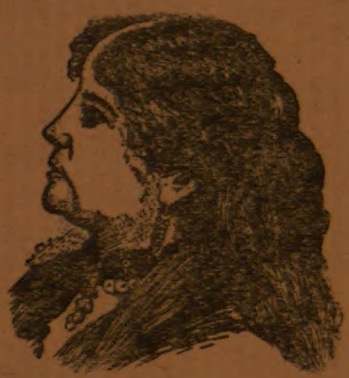
Instructive and Amusing

THE celebrated Fortune Teller M'lle LeNormand has foretold the Emperor Napoleon I., his ruin and the plotting of his relatives. Everything came to pass precisely as she had predicted. By special desire of Napoleon I., M'lle LeNormand presented him the cards from which the prophecy has been made, and also her written interpretation and instructions.



Amongst the Imperial Family Treasure this Gift was the most valued and treasured article.

The son of Napoleon III., having become possessed of this relic, could not escape his fate, however, being killed at an early age while battling for the English in the African campaign.

George Korn, native of Alsatia, a sailor and linguist, speaking German, French and English was captured by the Zulu tribe who had become possessed of the interpretations, instructions and cards taken from the body of Napoleon's son. Whilst in captivity, Korn often saw these cards.

Only these Cards and Nothing Else can be thy Savior

were his continual thoughts. Under the impulse of this inspiration he informed the chief of the magical power of these cards, which in possession of an enemy would cause dire disaster to his family as well as himself. Thoroughly frightened the chief gave this treasure to Korn and escorted him to the seacoast far from his place of captivity. After various wanderings and adventures he arrived at the German colony Kameron, where he secured a position on board a Hamburg merchant ship; and through these events we became possessed of the *Genuine Cards*, the handwritten interpretation and instructions how to use them.

M'lle LeNormand destroyed her cards and instructions before her death and had the ashes inclosed in a vessel of lead and which was laid in her tomb according to her last will, so these interpretations written for Napoleon I., and so cleverly saved by Korn were the only and genuine existing. These cards—Oraculum—have been tried in important events and are indeed *"Answers of Destiny."* For the believers it is a sacred treasure and in many instances an article of great value. Unbelievers can pass many tedious hours pleasantly in many ways, particularly in answering delicate questions correctly or otherwise. M'lle LeNormand's instructions in both English and German are complete and plain, and can readily be interpreted by everybody.

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